









"curves of stability" whose clear meaning can only be got at by the hacking and chopping of logic. Those actual facts we have before us clearly and surely in Hongkong and Manila as in London or in Cadix, and they are, that ninety-nine steamers out of a hundred are not considered safe and seaworthy by experts, or by professional seamen, without weight of some kind in their holds—whether that weight be called cargo, coal, water, or ballast, is of little consequence in this case as long as the terms of the contract do not prohibit its use.

"Un Filipino" takes H.M.S. *Incognita* as one example to illustrate his arguments, but is he aware that the *Incognita* has upwards of 500 tons of iron slag put into her bottom between the timbers, in order to effect a greater amount of stability than her lines and model give her?—this does not mean that the ship would not stand up without it;—it is put into her to make assurance doubly sure against all accidents and trials of storm and tempest;—to make, in fact, the vessel seaworthy. Sea going ballast or weight of some kind is, indeed, such a necessary part of a vessel's outfit that it is as requisite as any other part of her equipment before she can proceed to sea; and if this were not so, why should the most eminent shipbuilders fit their vessels to carry as much as 500 tons of water ballast, which nearly all first class steamers receive invariably, carry, and for the accommodation of which great expense is incurred. Finally, if the owners of the *Incognita* do not require her to carry that which all other steamers do carry—whether it is called ballast, water, cargo, stiffening, or iron slag—is no matter, why did they omit to mention it in that carefully drawn out specification where nothing is ever omitted which is considered essential, and nothing put in that can be fairly objected to? The specification said nothing about putting ballast into the hold; remarks your correspondent, well, it probably does not say anything about lifting the anchor to the bows, putting the chain cable into the locker, or placing the captain or some officer on the bridge; yet he would hardly maintain without reason, that the ship could be seaworthy without such matters being carried out, as by placing stiffening weight in the hold—as long as it does not exceed one quarter the vessel's register tonnage—is a common and customary proceeding in order to ensure stability, the builders can well maintain they had a perfect right to apply it;—and particularly since their contract with the owners did not prohibit it.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Hongkong, April 14th, 1888.

### SEARCHING FOR A TELEGRAPH CABLE.

The Submarine Telegraph Ship *Minia*, Captain Samuel Trott, was sent away from London during the latter days of last year to search for, pick up and repair a deep sea cable which had been laid about two miles under the surface of the ocean since 1866. This cable belonged to the West India Cable Company, and its actual distance down, at the defective part, which the ship had been sent to examine, was just 1,000 feet. The electricians having determined how many miles from the shore station the defect was, orders were sent to the *Minia* to go to the place, grapple for the cable, cut it while at the bottom, pick up the two ends, and splice in about twenty miles of a new length section. Some twenty days after receiving his orders the Captain of the *Minia* found himself and his ship in Lat. 42. 30 N. and Long. 45. 30 W., or just a little on the London side of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, and with one of the hardest jobs before him that had ever been committed to his charge. He knew that he had reached a geographical point somewhere near the defect, but within three or four miles he could not be certain for, even if his own observations of sun, moon and stars were correct to a mile, those by whom the cable was laid might have been even a dozen miles in error. The first business was to get a series of soundings over a patch of the sea covering 25 or 30 square miles. The new sounder was an oblong bar of iron weighing about 32 lbs. attached to a planiforte wire in such a way that when lowered to the bottom the end would job into the ground a series of small steel tubes, which while rising would give a series of notes, the first of which would be a "clink" or "clunk" for the weight to reach the bottom, a distance of 200 fathoms. Knowing now the depth and the character of the ground, a big pear-shaped buoy was cast overboard and moored at that depth with a mushroom anchor, firmly to the ground. This buoy was made of boiler plate iron, and fitted in such a way as to exhibit two large lanterns; for the *Minia*'s work was to be carried on night and day. The first length of mooring was 45 fathoms of chain, next 510 of patent rope, and then 100 of Manila and about 100 of various kinds, to reach the surface. All being now ready the *Minia* was steamed off at right angles to the buoy of the cable, about five or six miles, and another buoy was placed in other places and the field for work thus kept within known limits. The grappling iron was then put over the bows and from the northern limit of the field the ship steamed slowly southward. This grappling iron has four arms, about a foot long, joining a shank of about four feet. In each arm is a spring behind it. The angle of the arm is so small that a heavy stone could not get into it far enough to reach the bottom; but when the cable being searched for, is caught by the hooks or arms, it touches the bottom, presses down and closes an electrical circuit through a copper wire running up through the grapnel rope, and a bell is set ringing on deck. But the men in charge of the grapnel are generally able to tell what the hook has been doing, by the sound of the bell. The judge by the strain on the rope which is also indicated by a dynamometer on deck. The ordinary strain on this indicator is about 33 tons when the grapnel is dragging smoothly over a smooth bottom, as the vessel forges slowly ahead. Sometimes in catching a rock an arm may be broken off, but this is not often. In the first trial of the *Minia* it took 12 hours to descend 13,000 feet, and the rope is made of wire and hemp intermixed with each other. The dragging began on the day of arrival, but they were not successful in getting the cable. On the 10th day of dragging, the bell rang, indicating that the cable had been hooked. The rope was again let go and buoyed. The *Minia* steamed away two miles along the course of the cable, and prepared her cutting grapple, which is exactly like the other, only that the cutters have their upper surfaces sharpened like the blades of a knife, and when catching the cable, and bringing it strain on the heavy pressure at each cut the wire. Drilling had now to be commenced afresh, but very soon the cable was hooked and cut. As it had been at the bottom for nearly 20 years they were afraid of attempting pulling up the first hook, in case of its breaking, but on getting hold of a part near to a free end not more than two miles away they

"spended on this end 'giving' to extra pressure. Having cut the cable the *Minia* returned to the buoy of the first grapnel rope, and on getting the end on board led it to a great steam winch with a barrel six feet in diameter, when the work of hauling in at once commenced. The drum commenced revolving at half past one in the afternoon and at ten minutes before eight the cable, which had been laid fully two miles below the surface of the Atlantic for a period of nearly 20 years, was at the bows. Upwards of two miles of the end part had to be picked up, and as it came in around the revolving drum, and was stretched along the deck in regular fakes preparations were being actively put forward by the chief electricians for sending a report of their success to London. The telegraph office—a very complete one—was stationed amidships and on the instant of the end appearing it was seized, taken into the office, and a long report sent through it to the home office; after which the business of splicing in the new length commenced, by one expert in splicing attending to the core and another to the outside yarns. On the work being finished and the cable was again paid out, and the ship headed for a shallow part of the Banks—where picking up a cable was more easy—at the rate of from 3 to 4 knots an hour. Arriving in shallow water the new piece of cable was cut, from the part remaining in the tank, and thrown overboard, duly buoyed. The work of grappling for the old cable at once commenced and on being found and pulled up, duly spliced to the new end lying at the buoy, and the job thus completed which had taken well nigh two months of valuable and badly spared time of the Telegraph Company. The *Minia* now makes her head quarters at Halifax.

### THE UNCHARTERED "BANKS" OF SYDNEY.

Starting a deposit and discount bank, or any alleged institution of the sort, is mere child's play in Sydney, where in all manner of imposition is specially favoured by an indulgent interpreted law. An oyster-shop in a third-rate street is abandoned by its distressed and despairing proprietor; the situation is not good enough, to ensure the small amount of patronage required for the successful conduct of business, so the shutters are put up and the place becomes vacant. A lemonade-man comes along, but his offer to "alm-squash" is met with no response, and he also abandons the premises. Then a Chinaman looks at the place with a view to running it as a *fan-qua* shop, but the prospect is not encouraging, and he declines to venture. Yet the era of glory for that shop is at hand. A man with a reasonably English or even aggressively English name, the face of a thrice-convicted thief, and the voice of a Dutch German Jew comes into possession. He reforms the front of the premises, puts in large plate-glass windows, frosts the glass thereof, and upon it inscribes the legend "Hemisphere Loan, Mortgage, Discount, Deposit, Financial and Mercantile Bank and Patent-Resurrection Day-Building Society (Limited). Capital, £2,000,000. Office-hours, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 2 to 8 p.m., on Saturdays. Directors, Grasper O'Greedy, Esq., Hardup Scratchers, Esq., Leonidas Washington Ananias, Esq., Barabbas Hornyhand, Esq., and P. N. Threemonths, Esq., William Jobson, Manager. Balaam Sasse, Secretary." Then he calls the place at the place with a view to running it as a *fan-qua* shop, but the prospect is not encouraging, and he declines to venture. Yet the era of glory for that shop is at hand. A man with a reasonably English or even aggressively English name, the face of a thrice-convicted thief, and the voice of a Dutch German Jew comes into possession. 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